THE

RELIGIOUS ENQUIRER.

NO. I.

FOR OCTOBER, 1811.

CLLLESS CLLESS CONTROL CONTROL

VOL. I.

BEING PRINCIPALLY

Original tracts on Theoretical and Practical Religion, in prose and verse: And, also, answers to such questions as are presented in writing to the Western Universalian Conference, respecting their faith, or any particular passage of Scripture.

BY THE WESTERN UNIVERSALIAN CONFERENCE.

ELLEVEL STATES S

"The Bereans were accounted more noble than those of Thessalonica, "in that they searched the Scriptures to see if these things are "so."—Acts of the Apostles.

CONTENTS.

Introductory Epistle.

Search the Scriptures.

Answer to Israel Seekers.

Letter to the Methodist Conference.

A candid examination of the doctrine of Calvinism.

The Sinner invited to Christ.

Experimental Proverbs.

PRINTED FOR THE SUPERINTENDING COMMITTEE,
BY J. H. & H. PRENTISS.
1811.

The generous Patrons of the ENQUIRER, are hereby informed, that it is probable, that answers to the following Questions will appear in our next number.

QUESTION 1st.

Can God act without a motive? If not, can a scriptural answer be given what his motive was in creating the human family? If there can, an answer is requested.

QUESTION 2d

If Christ came into the world for the salvation of all men, and hath given an invitation to all to come, believe and be saved; and yet a man continues to disregard the invitation, and lives and dies in a state of unbelief, how can that man be saved?

QUESTION 3d.

What is the opinion of the Conference on the declaration of the Apostle contained in 2 Thess. 1st chap. 7th, 8th and 9th verses?

Introductory Epistle.

RELIGION consists of two branches, theory and practice; it is of the greatest consequence to have our theoretical views of Religion correct, in order that it may produce that practice, which is consistent with the divine precepts and examples of the

Great Captain of our Salvation.

In order to accomplish this all important object, an acquaintance with the divine Oracles of God's written word, is essentially necessary. The evil consequences of forming systems inconsistent with the general tenor of the sacred testimony, and adhering with unshaken prejudice to those systems, has been awfully experienced by mankind. From this source have arisen all the difficulties which have existed in the Christian Church since the apostacy; this has been the cause of those impenetrable partition walls which have given rise to that deadly hatred which has existed between different sectarians, and manifested itself by judgements, anathemas, carnage and slaughter. Every step, therefore, which is taken towards allaying those difficulties, by endeavouring to harmonize mankind in a system of truth, and encourage them in the pursuit of pure and undefiled religion, must be acknowledged by all people to be truly a laudable under-This is the avowed object of this little work. For this purpose, we, in the first place, appointed Quarterly Conferences, and gave earnest invitations to christian brethren of every denomination to attend, and with us diligently search the Scriptures to find the truth therein contained; and we have reason to conclude that we have seen some happy effects result from the free inquiry which has been made.

A fervent desire to extend the benefits of our Conference, has induced us, however arduous the undertaking, to publish a few pages every quarter, hoping thereby to encourage people to read with new and animated zeal, the sacred pages of divine truth; to listen to the voice of wisdom and find her paths, for "her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace;" by these means to smooth the rugged path of life, or rather, instead of its being a thorny maze, to show it to be a garden of delights, a path strowed with pleasant flowers, where gentle zephyrs delightfully play, and where the mind joyfully inhales the odouriferous breath, which gives new life to the understanding and raises the soul, with grateful sensations, to the giver of every good and

perfect gift.

We are not insensible of the many difficulties which we shall labour under in presenting such a publication to public view; the prejudices of many people are already awakened to a high degree against the doctrines which we profess, and their minds, consequently, prepared to reject every thing which may come from this quarter, however consistent it may be with itself, and with the divine oracles of God's written word. But being fully sensible that it is the privilege of mankind to believe the truth, and that truth is that alone which can make them free, and earnestly desiring that captive souls may be delivered from the bondage of error, and be brought to the enjoyment of true Gospel liberty; we are determined to brave every storm, and resolutely to come forward and enlist under the sacred banners of that spirit which leads, guides and directs into all truth, and we hereby give an earnest invitation to all pepole of every denomination, to come and diligently enquire, with us, after the truth as it is in Jesus. We do not pretend to set ourselves up as the only standard of truth, and condemn, and uncharitably censure all who disagree with us in doctrinal points, but our determination is, if we say any thing respecting any particular tenet imbibed by any part of mankind, to compare it carefully with itself and with the Scriptures, and leave the decision to a candid public. Whenever we attempt an answer to any question, presented to us, respecting our faith, or whenever we give our opinion on any particular passage of Scripture, we are determined that candor, deliberation and charity shall mark every step. People will not expect, from the narrow limits of this work, that very lengthy answers can be attempted, but every question which is marked with candor and a spirit of serious enquiry, will meet with all the attention due to their merit, and will receive as explicit answers as the limits of the work will permit.

As Poetry is highly pleasing to many, and calculated to soften the unruly passions of the breast, and lull to calm repose the perturbed and fluctuating mind; and as it is wonderfully calculated to awaken the finer feelings of the soul, and raise it on wings of immortal delight, to the benign Author of all true felicity: poetical essays will, therefore, occasionally find a place within the

bounds of this work.

As we do not set ourselves up as an infallible standard of truth, but are willing to receive instruction and assistance from any quarter, we shall, therefore, take the liberty occasionally to quote from other authors such essays as shall be instructing, edifying, or encouraging to the pursuit of virtue and holiness. And whatever, from time to time, we shall truly consider will be for the instruction and advantage of mankind, which will serve to increase love and benevolence among the people, to break down

those middle walls which separate the true lovers of God and his Religion, and increase true piety, we promise our readers shall be presented to them, as far as possible, through the medium of

the Enquirer.

d

r

0

n

With these views, and on these conditions, we venture to launch our little barque, with a fervent prayer that a gentle breezo from the infinite fulness of Almighty love, may waft it safely over the tempestuous sea of human prejudice, and land it on that shore where it shall give welcome relief to captive souls.

We do not expect that our work will stand the test of the scrutinizing eye of the connoisseur, but that is the least of our concern; if it has a tendency to induce the people to read the scriptures, and practice virtue, it will answer all the desires and

wishes of the Publishers.

Search the Scriptures.

155555555

Go, search my holy Scriptures, saith the Lord, In them ye think eternal life ye see; They are my work, the product of my word, "And they are they which testify of me."

My spirit shall attend you in the path, Make truth with heavenly lustre on you shine; Shall break the bands which chain you down to death, And raise your souls to joy and peace divine.

There may you read the sacred promise sure, Immortal life unfolding to your view; There see, for sin and wo, a sovereign cure, And wisdom's path with rapturous joy pursue.

How vain is man, who seeks for perfect joys Beneath the circuit of the rolling sun; Who grasps, with anxious mind, earth's fleeting toys, And grovels in the earth for peace to come.

5

Immortal life grows not from earthly store;
There rust corrupts, and moth corrodes our wealth;
Hearts, set on earthly fame, can know no more
Than joys as fleeting as the human breath.

6

Seek then, O man, thy treasure in the Lord, And set your heart on joys that never die; Peruse the sacred pages of his word, And rise from earth to mansions in the sky.

7

There shall you taste unmingled joys above, While streams of bliss from heavenly fountains roll; There feast eternal on God's perfect love, While strains immortal swell th' enraptur'd soul.

8

These, these, O man, are sweets which earth can't gain, Nor all united powers of hell disturb; Old time may roll, earth's billows sweep the plain, You'll stand unshaken on the mount of God.

To the Western Universalian Conference, holden in the Butternuts, September 28, 1811.

5555555

MEN AND BRETHREN,

As you have given the hand of fellowship to a Sister in Israel, by a letter testimonial, recommending her as a public teacher, I have taken the liberty to present before you the following Queries.

1. Were there any females, under the Law, belonging to the priesthood of Aaron, as figurative of ministerial women under

the Gospel?

2. Do we read in the Prophets, any predictions of women being called to the work by the out-pouring of the Spirit, or any other means to be used under the Gospel?

3. Did our Saviour ever, in the days of his flesh, send out any women to proclaim the true Messiah and Saviour of the world?

4. Were any, after his death and resurrection, commanded to go and preach, proclaim, or declare this truth of a risen Savi sur?

5. If these queries cannot be answered in the affirmative, and

it is presumed by many they cannot, then what right has a woman to preach the Gospel?

6. Can it even be proved, that in the Church male and semale are all one in Christ, and of course spiritual gifts descend on both?

7. Are not the women prohibited from speaking in public? See 1 Coi. chap. 14, verses 34, 35, Let your women keep silence in the Churches, &c. See also 1 Timothy, chap. 2, verses 11, 12, 13, 14, Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence, for Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression.

8. Did any women in the Apostolic age labour in the Lord for example (to us,) and who were fellowshipped by the Apostles

as fellow labourers in the Lord?

Brethren of the stock of Israel, you are requested to give the above Queries a fair, candid and impartial examination in your Conference, and to publish the same, with your answers, as the wisdom of God shall dictate, in the Religious Enquirer. Your compliance will much oblige

ISRAEL SEEKERS, IN THE LORD.

Answers to Israel Seekers Queries.

Query 1, On a woman's right to the ministry, from any figure

or example in the priesthood of Aaron?

Answer. We are not to follow that priesthood for an example, for this reason, the High Priest of our profession was not made after the order of Aaron. See Heb. chap. 7, especially verses 11, 12. Now the Gospel High Priest and his ministering servants are not to imitate Aaron and his sons, who were but outward men, but to be more like those who had the spirit of prophecy in those days, consisting of men and women—Witness Deborah, Anna, &c.

Query 2, Do we read in the Prophets any predictions of wo-

men being called, &c.?

Answer. We do. See Joel, chap. 2, verses 28, 29, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy; upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days, will I pour out my spirit. We conceive those days commenced with the Apostolic preaching. To be a prophet or prophetess, is to hold one of the first offices in the Church

of Christ. To prophecy in private, is a contradiction of terms, for the Apostle saith, "No prophecy is of any private interpretation."

Query 3, Did our Saviour ever in the days of his flesh, send

out any women, &c.?

Answer. He did send the woman of Samaria, whom he met at the well's mouth. She went full of faith, and published to her countrymen the very Christ the Savior of the world. See the account recorded in St. John, chap. 4, verses 28, 29, 30, 39, 40, 41, 42. She said, "Come and see a man that told me all things," &c.

Query 4, Were any commanded to go and declare a risen

Savior after his resurrection?

Answer. Yes, a woman was the first who received this office, even Mary, out of whom Christ had cast seven devils before his death. St. John, chap. 20, verses 17, 18. So according to the fifth query, you may see the above questions have been answered in the affirmative, by proofs or evidence, except the first, which we trust has been shown not to require an answer in the affirmative to prove that women have a right to preach the Gospel.

Query 6, Can it even be proved, that in the Church male and

female are all one in Christ as to priviledges and gifts?

Answer. We think it can: to this purport writes the Apostle, Gal. iii, 28, where he speaketh in this wise, "there is neither bond nor free, male or female, Greek or Scythian, but all are one in Christ Jesus." And in 2 Corinthians, chap. v. 16, he saith, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh." From which it appears very evident, that we are not, in spiritual matters, to judge after the flesh, as to male from female; in point of priviledge, we must make no distinction, for the Church is all one in Christ Jesus.

Query 7, Are not the women prohibited from speaking in pub-

lic? 1 Cor. chap. 14, verses 34, 35.

Answer. As under the law they are, being considered as acting in their own strength, and as they were not spiritually minded, contentions arose in the church at Corinth, confusion and disorder ensued; therefore St. Paul commands silence: However, in the 11th chap. he gives directions how their women must appear when praying and prophecying, as well as the men, from which we learn, that no person when led by the spirit of God, whether male or female, is prohibited the right to speak; but when led by the same spirit that Eve was in the transgression, they have no right to speak, which must be meant in 1 Tim. chap. 2, v. 11, &c. Now if the Serpent deceived the woman, her seed has bruised his head. And if the woman (Eve) without the help of Adam, conceived and brought sin into the world,

surely the woman (Mary) without the help of man has, through divine assistance, made up the breach, and swept away the stain from woman kind, by conceiving and bringing forth into the world a Saviour. Women have a right to preach that Saviour.

Query 8, Did any women in the Apostolic age labour in the

Lord for example?

Answer. Yes: There was Phæbe, servant of the church at Cenchsea. Likewise Priscilla and Aquilla, St. Paul's helpers in Christ Jesus, and Mary, who bestowed much labor; also, Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labored in the Lord, as also did Persis. These names you will find recorded in Romans, chap. 16th. St. Paul in another place exhorts the brethren to help

those women who labored in the Lord.

The second Epistle of John is written to the Elect J.ady and her Children, which must be understood to mean a Female teacher and the members of a church gathered through her instrumentality, or in other words begotten by her through the Gospel, therefore called her children, as St. Paul speaks of his begetting the Corinthian church, 1 Cor. 4, 15, to understand it otherwise involves difficulties absurd and ridiculous to mention. To suppose the Elect Lady to be a particular church, who then must her children be? Were they the unregenerate? No: for John found her children walking in the truth. Were they the natural born children of the several members of the church? No, for as before. And there is no one who walks in the truth, but what is free from the law of sin, and constitutes one of the members of Christ's church, being a part of the body, but not a son nor daughter of the body. Therefore we understand (by the Elect Lady and her children) as before we have expressed it. From all which, we may safely conclude, that a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to our sister sex as certainly as to us. We. might as well say, they have no souls to save, as to deny they have a right and power to preach the Gospel.

Brother Seekers, we hope these answers will give your inquiring minds full satisfaction on the important subject represented in your eight queries, while we remain yours in the Lord—Amen.

Brother Calvin Winslow's Letter to the Methodist Conference.

As there has been much said respecting Brother CALVIN WINSLOW'S excommunication from the Methodist connexion,

and many false reports are in circulation respecting the cause which produced this circumstance; and also with regard to a corrosive and wicked letter which he sent to the conference; we have thought proper to give publicity to the letter alluded to, which will give the truth to the public, and enable them to judge for themselves, with regard to the corruption and wickedness therein contained.

I hereby certify, that the following letter is a correct copy drafted from the original, except a few sentences of the last part, (viz. from &c.) But what is substituted contains the substance,

if not the words of the original, verbatim.

NATHANIEL STACY.

E ATON, SEPTEMBER 20, 1809.

Calvin Winslow, to the Methodist social Quarterly Conference, in Pompey Circuit, to be holden at Mr. Enoch Wilcox's, in the Town of Pompey, on the 7th day of October next.

Wishing Grace, Mercy and Peace.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,

It pleased the God and Father of Spirits of all flesh, (as ye have heard) some years past, to stop me in my high career of vice, to give me a manifestation of his Divine Grace, and, as I humbly trust, to call me by his Spirit into the work of the Ministry. I united myself with the Methodists, and with you have I labored, with you have I borne the fatigues of the day, with you have I been stigmatized by the world, and with you have I borne pain and shame for Jesus' sake. But with you also have I been happy, in your assemblies have I received divine enjoyments, and my soul has been refreshed with the delicious fruits of eternal life. We have sat in the assembly of the saints, we have taken sweet counsel together, we have reciprocated in the priviledges and duties of public and social worship, while the sweet effusions of divine love descended upon us like the dew of Hermon, assimilating our souls and teaching us how good and how pleasant it was for brethren to dwell together in unity; your friendship has been dear to my soul, and your counsel sweeter than the honey from the honey-comb. When I united myself with you, I was honest, I was sincere, in conscience I believed your doctrine, I could see nothing else consistent with divine revelation, I espoused it with zeal, I preached it with all the power God gave me, and appeal to the Searcher of Hearts for the honesty of my heart, for the integrity of my motives.

But I always believed that those who trusted in the Lord, should renew their strength and grace from faith, to faith; I, therefore, never closed the doors of information, but ever held myself open to conviction, and meant to be a sincere searcher after

I always believed, since I had Religion, that salvation truth. was fice for all—that it was the will of God that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, that Christ had tasted death for all, and had opened a door of hope for the fallen Adam's race. And God has finally led me to believe, by the operation of his divine spirit, in opening the Scriptures of divine truth more fully to my understanding, that He worketh all things according to his own will, and does all at his own pleasure. To make an honest confession of my belief, I was sensible would give great pain to many of my highly esteemed brethren in connexion, I was therefore determined to keep it a secret, -but the Voice of Truth, like seven-fold thunder to my understanding, required my obedience to the Heavenly Vision. Truth was what people expected from me in my ministry, and truth alone could make them free. I found, therefore, a corroding worm in my breast, sleep departed from my eyes and slumber from my eyelids, until I determined with the Apostle, " to renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, nor walk in craftiness, nor handle the word of God deceitfully, but by a manifestation of truth, to commend myself to every man's conscience in the sight of God."-And now, my Brethren, this is to announce to you my belief; and I do not hesitate to declare to you and to the world in the fear of God, that I believe in the "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouths of all his holy Prophets since the world began." That "for this purpose was the Son of God manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil;" that he will finish sin, and make an end to transgression; that Christ " gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time;" "that in the dispensation of the fullness of time, he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven and which are in earth even in him."

I shall not attempt at present a further vindication of my sentiments than what is contained in the foregoing passages of Scripture; but implore my brethren not to throw me uncharitably away. Remember, dear Brethren, that without Charity we are nothing. Therefore put on Charity the bond of perfectness, and if you view me to be ignorant and out of the way, put on tender bowels of compassion and pray for me, rebuke me in charity, and it shall be like an excellent oil that shall not break my head, show me my error and I will forsake it, for I yet, as ever, hold

myself open to the conviction of truth.

Being sensible that under existing circumstances, my Brethren can no longer walk with me, I have therefore, inclosed and returned my letter of licence, not that I have withdrawn my love and prayers from my brethren, God forbid. I love you in the sincerity of a Christian,—I believe there is pure religion

among you, and God grant that you may ever enjoy it, and be enabled to walk as children of the light. Neither would I have wished to have withdrawn from your connection, had I not

known that your discipline required it.

I have received a letter from the presiding Elder warning me to trial, stating that I have exclaimed against the characters of those in connection with me, and had preached doctrines contrary to methodism, &c. With regard to the allegations brought against me, I would observe on the first, that doubtless in an unguarded moment, being irritated by hearing the harsh expressions of some of my brothers against me, I have given way to the first impulse of passion, and retaliated upon them. acknowledge my error, and ask your forgiveness and your prayers that God would forgive me. With regard to the second, I acknowledge it in the fullest sense, and I have herein given you I should be happy to attend your Conference if it was possible, but my present circumstances and engagements will render it impossible. I must now conclude, Dear Brethren, by asking your fervent prayers to Almighty God for my peace and salvation, that if I am in an error, that He would be graciously pleased to save me from the same, and bring me to the knowleage of the truth. And I promise you that you shall have my prayers for your increase in the knowledge of the truth, that God would be pleased to bless you with every blessing, and finally prepare you for a glorious residence in his immortal kingdom. Amen.

Your affectionate Brother in Christ, CALVIN WINSLOW.

te

O

ly,

to

wh

tio

vir

of

du

dai

A candid examination of Calvinism.

41212222

IN Samuel Hopkins' system of Divinity, vol. 1, chap. 4, page 106, it is asserted, that "the Assembly of Divines in their shorter catechism, have given a concise definition of the decrees of God, which is both rational and agreeable to the holy scriptures, viz—The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the council of his own will, whereby for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass; God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy council of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass."

This great schoolman, honoured with the appellation of D.D. was formerly Pastor of the first Congregational church in New-

port, by many esteemed an orthodox divine, and by some a man of wisdom. However, be this as it may, undoubtedly he had knowledge sufficient to form sentences, by words, which would convey his real meaning as an author. Hence I can see no reason why any one should be so bold and daring as to attempt spiritualizing, or, in other words, explaining away his meaning. Surely he hath written in plain English, and therefore his words

do express his positive meaning.

Mr. Hopkins was a decided disciple and follower of John Calvin, as well as a great admirer of the judgement of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, which is evident, not only from the above quotation, but from the general tenor of the whole of his chap, on the decrees of God. He considered them as all concisely, rationally and truly defining the decrees of God. I have therefore made choice of the above quotation as a foundation of my discourse, in which I design to unveil Calvanism, as it relates to God's decreeing and foreordainining whatsoever comes to pass, and to shew the public the nature and tendency of that system.

It is asserted, that "God hath from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordained whatsoever comes to pass." But it has come to pass, that there are two remarkable beings in the universe, one an administrator of righteousness and peace, the other supposed to be an administrator of sin and disorder; the former is Jesus Christ, and the latter that old serpent called the Devil, which deceiveth

the whole world.

But the question is, which of the two is an ordained minister of God? Calvinism answers both, since the existence of both has come to pass, and whatsoever comes to pass is ordained of God.

Which was ordained first, Christ or the Devil? Calvinism answers, their ordinations are of equal date, both were from all

eternity.

Did God ordain Christ and the Devil freely and voluntarily, or was it a matter of necessity as it related to one, and freely to the other? Calvinism answers, "God did freely foreordain whatsoever comes to pass."

Does every thing that comes to pass relative to their opposition to each other, transpire agreeably to God's holy will? Calvinism answers in the affirmative, "God according to the counsel of his own will, did foreordain whatsoever comes to pass."

Does the Devil as well as Christ glorify God in all his conduct which comes to pass? Calvinism answers, "God foreor-

dained whatsoever comes to pass for his own glory."

According to the principles of Calvinism it would rack the

brain of a stoic to determine in his own mind which was the most faithful servant of God, Christ or the Devil, seeing they both, each on his own part, do nothing either in thought, word or deed, but what comes to pass according to the predetermined counsel and foreordination of God. And I presume to say, should the Devil be so successful, when arraigned before the bar of God, as to prove that the above system of Calvinism is true, he must then in equity, receive the plaudit of well done true and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. And all his ministering servants, let their moral conduct have appeared to men ever so vile, must stand next to their leader in point of justification, seeing all their works that have ever come to pass, have been so by the will and pretermined counsel of God, and have all been to his glory. And I would further observe, that if these things are so, then men do but deceive themselves when they believe that any opposition against God comes to pass in the universe, seeing whatsoever comes to pass is by divine appointment. But, perhaps some will try to stop me here, and say, "sir, you are too plain." If you are a Calvinist, it is not proper that you should make this objection, at least you reply against the decree of heavda, for if it has come to pass that I have been plain, God ordained it, according to your own system. Furthermore, Mr. Hopkins, the great defender of your faith, advises all who meddle with the subject to be plain, without disguise, and not to the halves; see p. 223, vol. 1, chap. 4th. According to this author, every man is a divine in all his conduct, for he very boldly asserts all to be ruled by divine influence, and that the divine agency is exercised in all the conduct of men, whether they appear moral or immoral. p. 194, "God has foreordained all the moral evil which does take place, and is in such a sense, and so far, the origin and cause of it, that he is said to bring it to pass by his own agency." See also p. 211, "Wicked men, in all actions, are represented to be as much in the hands of God and moved by him as the saw, ax, rod or staff are in the hand and power of a man who uses and moves them." These are Hopkins' own words, in plain English. Now what is it that constitutes a divine, but a person to be led altogether by a divine impulse and moved in all they do by the Divine God of Heaven. Surely, no human school, without a divine influence, can make a divine in all his administrations. Hence I infer, that all wicked men, in all their actions, are real And we must conclude that Tom Divines, if Hopkins is right. Paine and Voltaire were as really Divines as Doctor Hopkins or Edwards, as the latter could boast of no more divine influence, in writing or speaking, than what Mr. Hopkins grants to the former, in connection with all other wicked men.

to

0

a

ai

is

ag de

sh

pe tii

m

ge

G

Now let us but for a moment apply Mr. Hopkins' similitude

of saw, ax, rod or staff, to the case of T. Paine in his writings against the Bible; what was he then but as a saw in the hand of God, to saw asunder the chain of Revelation, and as an ax, to cut, hew and destroy the character of the Prophets, and as a rod or staff to beat and belabour the ministers of the Gospel? And who has a right to find fault, seeing that all this deistical activity was of God, while poor Paine was no more than a mere machine in passive obedience to God, as Mr. Hopkins describes wicked men to be in all their actions. If Mr. Paine had a hard and obstinate heart, God's will was done in him, if Hopkins, on the subject of hardness and obstinacy, was right; see p. 191-" It is the will of God, that all the hardness and obstinacy of heart which is found amongst men, should exist just as it does." From which we learn, if the author is right, that if a person has a heart to murder, he then has a disposition agreeable to God's will, and that God moves him to do the work effectually, as an ax to take away a head at one stroke, or as a rod to beat out the brains of a fellow creature, like Cain who slew his brother. The reader may ask, "Did God help Cain kill Abel?" so says Calvinism, if we may believe what the disciples of Calvin have said. For if all wicked men are moved by the hand of God in all they do, as much as a saw, ax and staff are moved in the hands of men who use them, then it would be true that God helped Cain kill rightcous Abel. For surely a saw cannot cut asunder the timber without the help of the hand, neither, according to Mr. Hopkins' similitude, could Cain divide the life of Abel from the body, but by the help of God. And yet Mr. Hopkins, and other Calvinists acknowledge every man to be a free agent, acting from choice, or agreeable to their own will, which God's decrees cause to exist in them according to the predeterminate counsel of his own will, and supports, in every exertion, by his own divine agency. See, S. Hopkins on Decrees, page 207, "Moral evil and sin takes place in consequence of Divine agency." From which it appears, there must have been a kind of partnership existing between God and Cain, who both exercised their free agency, agreeable to the will of each, which brought about the death of righteous Abel. However, if it was so, their partnership must have been dissolved as soon as the horrid deed was perpetrated. For God blamed Cain for something done at that time, from which we may be allowed to draw this inference (even from Calvanism,) viz. that God by his divine agency helpeth the murderer, and every other reprobate in all their sins, until he gets them into hell, where he leaves them for the sport of Devils.

"God (saith Zuinglius) moveth the robber to kill, he killeth, God forcing him thereunto; but thou wilt say, he is forced to

1

al

m

or

in

er,

de

sin, I admit truly he is forced." "Reprobate persons (saith Piscator) are absolutely ordained to this two-fold end, to undergo everlasting punishment, and necessarily to sin, and therefore to

sin that they may be justly punished."

This quotation puts me in mind of a certain Doctor who hated his neighbor, and that he might have an occasion where withal to accuse him, took some of his own goods and secreted in the man's barn, then went immediately and complained that his house had been robbed, and obtained a search warrant, by virtue of which, the stolen goods were found, and the presumption against the man became strong, (in whose barn the goods were found.) However, the secret decree, or counsel of the doctor was discovered by some, who (like our clergy) were fond of declaring the secrets of him they had called their friend, which fixed a stain on the doctor's character, but no cause of guilt or crimination against his neighbor. So much for illustration by a hint.

Now let us hear what Calvin himself hath said. "I say, that by the ordination and will of God, Adam fell. God would have man to fall. Man is blinded by the will and the commandment of God. We refer the causes of hardening us to God. The highest or remote cause of hardening, is the will of God. It foleth that the hidden counsel of God is the cause of hardening."—

These are Calvin's own expressions.

Doct. Hopkins says, [page 215] Calvin, and the Assembly of Divines at Westminister, assert, that the divine decree and agency respecting sin, imply more than a bare permission, viz. something positive and efficacious. If these passages are true, God is the real cause of sin, or of the transgression of his own law, although he damns the instrument he uses for that purpose.-And wherefore? Because man did not break God's eternal decree instead of the divine law, and that by opposing the predeterminate counsel of his holy will. We also learn from the same, every throught, intent and volition of the sinner's mind, and the most minute circumstances, even all things in the universe, are of the Deity, and that there is no activity but what is in and of him; that the whole creation is moved as a machine by the agency of the Creator. But the reader perhaps will say, " this is rank Deism, to suppose all active motion is of the Deity." I know the word Deism signifies such a belief, inits derivation. And Calvinism when unveiled is deism, as it relates to the decrees of God. In this respect Calvin and Voltaire were agreed, and the Disciples of each still agree, as I have found by conversing frequently with both parties.

However, the vulgar generally suppose there is no difference between infidelity and deism. But they labor under a mistake, for to be an infidel, is to disbelieve the truth, but to be a deist, one must be a Calvinist, and if Calvinism is true, he is no infidel, but a believer of the truth. Again, if it is true, he who disbelieves it is an infidel and no deist. Now there are two sorts of deists: Calvinists are bible deists, inasmuch as they pretend to prove their sentiments by it; the disciples of Veltaire and Paine are natural deists, seeing they pretend to vindicate deism by the book of nature.

Mr. Hopkins says, page 219, all professed deists see the doctrine of the divine decrees, and the fixed certainty of all events, plainly asserted in the bible. And in page 212, he says, they who are humble, and feel their dependance on God, and are pleased with it, are most likely to understand these things. This is something in favour of all professed deists; for if Mr. Hopkins was right, they are a humble people, and feel their dependance on

God, being not far from the kingdom of Heaven!

Again the Doctor says, p. 222, they who see and approve of the wisdom of God, in making all things for himself, and ordering all things, even the sins of men, for his own glory, must themselves desire and seek the glory of God. That is, I conclude, they must themselves desire and seek his glory, not by sinning against God, but by sinning for him, even for God's glory, by obeying his order, as he orders the sins of men for that purpose. For, according to Calvanism, there is no such thing as positive sin against God, as in every action the creature acts in perfect conformity to the order of God and agreeably to his Neither does the reprobate sin against himself by transgressing against his own will, for he, as a free agent, acts out his will; but he sins against the Law, which causes him to think he has sinned against God; as Calvin expresses it, " man is blinded by the commandment." This doctrine, Mr. Hopkins observes, p. 223, parents ought to be able and willing to teach to their children. But, I presume to say, that if a parent has any in his family who are in the decree of reprobation, he never will be able to lead them into the truth, for if he should, they would then be made free, from the idea of sin against God, and rejoice exceedingly that all they had done or could do, was for God's glory and agreeable to his eternal will, from which they might expect to be rewarded an hundred fold for all their sins, and become one of Calvin's elect, which would break one link in his chain of decrees; if an eternal reprobate should be elected and get to heaven, the whole fabric of Calvinism would tumble into ruins.

S. Hopkins says, vol. 1, chap. 4, p. 220, Nothing takes place, but what is important and necessary to accomplish the wisest and best end, the glory of God. God will bring infinite good out of all the evil, and for this end he has foreordained whatsoever

comes to pass.

e

of

of

e-

he

n-

d.

les

ith

nce

ke,

ist,

According to this passage, who would not wish to be one of that number of Calvin's elected ones, and know that they never committed a sin but what was importantly the cause of infinite good; nor that any thing had ever taken place with them, but what was necessary, and the best thing that could be done at that time, for the glory of God. If a Nero could believe this, he must feel happy by possessing a clear conscience, and could say, I have always acted for the glory of God. Yea, any common highwayman, who is convicted for robbery and murder, when arraigned before any human tribunal, might say, (if Hopkins be correct) " I was right when I meditated the robbing and murdering of Mr. M. C. It was the best thing I could do, to take both his money and life from him; it was for the glory of God, who moved me to do it by his own agency." If this plea were made beforea jury of Calvinistic deacons, and John Calvin the judge, how must they act to be consistent with their religious tenets? I presume the Jury would find him guilty, the Judge pass sentence, and the criminal's death take place, for the glory of God; and judge and jury might say, "all was right, God hath decreed such a succession of events for the greatest possible good and to accomplish the wisest end, his own glory." "Behold (says one) judge, jury and criminal, all Calvinists, and if all have equally acted for the glory of God, to heaven or hell together they must go." But to such an one, Calvinists will reply as follows: "Sir, you have a carnal, reprobate mind, and the carnal mind cannot discern the things of the spirit: God hardens the hearts and blinds the eyes of reprobates, that they should never see the truth. But I'll not spend my breath in talking with such a reprobate, who has not been to college." However, we may be indulged in reading some of their books on divinity, then let us see what Mr. Hopkins says, p. 207, Here are two distinct agents, infinitely different, God absolutely independent and almighty, and a creature absolutely dependent for every thought and volition, having no power and sufficiency that is not derived immediately from his Maker; sin takes place in consequence of the divine determination and agency.

From this passage, if the Doctor was right, we learn that God determined the creature should sin in every instance as he does, and to render it certain, worketh in him, by his own divine agency, every evil thought and a diabolical will and propensity necessary for that purpose; and that this is the immediate exercise of God's divine agency in the creature's mind, from which every evil thought and volition is derived and put in motion. The Doctor, through several pages, labours hard to prove, that in every instance where the action of the creature is mentioned, the divine is implied; that when the creature is said to cleanse his

own heart, God is understood as cleansing it; and that when he hardens his own heart, God hardens it; and here he says are two agents, &c. Calvinism, when unveiled, appears to be darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. But still it is presumed, that they do not mean to be understood that there is any evil in God's willing or loving to have his creature's sin and be damned, as it respects his part, but all the criminality is on the part of the other, or passive agent; for they alledge, that God has a right to do with his own as he pleases; and they think he has a disposition to send the greatest part of mankind to hell, for his own glory; even for acting according to the predeterminate counsel of his own will, which he helped them to do. From which it appears, that human nature is a mere piece of machinery; and that we may, with propriety, liken Calvinism to a certain watch-maker, who, to shew his skill, made a small but very good gold watch for himself, which was not only to keep the time of the day, but also of the month, according to the predeterminate counsel of his own will; to this end, ordered and fixed every spring, wheel, chain and screw fast in their proper place, and set his son to keep it in repair; by which means it run well, according to the workman's expectation. Well, he made another watch, ten times as large as the former, of brass; this he also made for himself, with a design that it should only keep the hour of the day, and that but poorly; and to this end he fixed every part in a loose, disorderly condition; neither was his son to repair any part of it, and it was a bad watch, according to the predeterminate counsel and will of the workman. And on a great and public day, (according to the order of the father) his son appeared before him with both watches for examination, and the gold watch he pronounced good, according to the will of his father. But, turning to that of brass, pronounced it as bad as his father had predetermined it should be, even a reprobate watch; and then, to show his and his father's implacable hatred towards it, with eyes and countenance flashing fury, he lifted an iron rod and dashed the reprobate watch into a thousand pieces, as a potter's vessel is broken, and then cast its scattered remains into a burning firey furnace. But why did he not make both watches good, and keep both in repair? Why should the watch-maker make one bad, purposely to destroy it, when it had run just as he would have it? We must look to Calvinism for a solution of this question, which will tell us he did so to shew his great skill and power, viz. that he could make a bad watch as well as a good one, and he destroyed it to shew his sovereign right to do with his own as he pleased, and likewise to show the public that he was not so self opinionated as to admire all his own works, that he had made some good and some

bad, that he loved the former, but hated the latter; and he had an undoubted right to do with his own as he pleased. This is a Calvinistic answer in short metre, to which we must make no

farther reply by prying into secrets.

Calvinistic authors and preachers allow, that all sin and rebelion is against the revealed will of God, yet not derogatory to the predeterminate counsel of his secret will; and when they mean to write or preach against sin and the devil, they will refer you to God's revealed will in the Bible. But, on the other hand, when they are treating on the decrees of God, in favour of sin and the devil, they will refer to their notion of a secret will in God. But how they came to be so wise as to know more about God than has ever been revealed, I cannot tell. Surely no secrets exist in the book of revelation, called the holy bible, yet they pretend to prove their doctrine by it. They often dwell on the decrees of God, as they call them, one part of the day, at their meetings, and on the revealed will of God the other part. On the former subject, they will tell the audience, "that they can do nothing to obtain salvation; that our salvation depends entirely on our being elected from all eternity," &c. But when they come to the latter, they then tell the people, "that God is willing all should come and be saved, and that all can come if they will;" and with the greatest apparent zeal, they exhort their auditors to work out their own soul's salvation, &c. which all in substance sounds to many of their hearers, like the following, taken from a Theological Magazine:

"You can, and you can't, God will, and he wo'nt, You shall, and you sha'nt,

Shall be damn'd if you don't, and be damn'd if you do."

Mr. Hopkins, when he comes to treat upon the apostacy of man, speaks of sin being against the revealed will of God, which casts a veil over all that he had said on the decrees. See chap. 8, p. 355—" From the apostacy of man, and the way in which sin entered into the world, we are warned of the folly and danger of disregarding divine revelation, and giving the least heed to any assertions or suggestions which are contrary to the revealed will of God, or which are not warranted by that." From which it appears there are certain assertions and suggestions in existence which he would warn us against, as he allows they are in opposition to the revealed will of God. Suppose we contrast this with page 191, where the doctor says, "It is the will of God that all the hardness and obstinacy of heart which is found amongst men, should exist just as it does." From which it is evident, that Calvinists believe, or profess, that there are two opposite wills in God, and that sin takes place by consent of one and in opposition to the other.

Calvinism may be likened to a great King who was an absolute sovereign, and could do according to his will with every individual subject; he professed universal love and good will towards them, without respect of persons, wrote it in a book and called it the revelation of the will and design of the Great King; and he said, "Hear, O ye people, the conditions of your King: If ye will hear and obey me, and keep my statutes, then will I make of you a great, free and happy people, which I sincerely desire ye would; but if ye do not hearken unto me, then shall ye fall into the hands of your enemies and become wretched slaves." Howbeit, he had a secret design upon the people, and introduced deceivers among them, and by the temptations of the King, they were corrupted, wherefore the King rose in anger against them, and sold them into the hands of a cruel King. And after a while he sent his son with a price sufficient to redeem them, & he professed the good will of his father to them all. Howbeit, he redeemde buta few, & left the remainder in misery for life, without hope; which was all found to take place according to the predeterminate counsel and secret will of the Great King.

But why should the Great King, from beginning to end, in every particular, treat his subjects? Calvinism answers thus, to show his hatred towards the major part, and his love, that is his

partiality, to the minor, and to make his power known.

But was not the King and his Son guilty of duplicity in the affair? Calvinism answers, "The King and his Son, both one, could not be guilty, as they were subject to no law, but had a sovereign right to do with their own subjects as they pleased. The King had a right to have destroyed them all if he had pleased. No one had a right to call him to account for what he did. It was a sovereign mercy that he saved any; for he had a right if he pleased, to have corrupted them a thousand times more, even until they had become cannibals and fed each upon the others flesh like ravenous wolves, and then have annihilated them all." This is a Calvinistic answer, or like it.

St. Paul complained of two opposite principles in his members; one was a will to do good, and the other to do evil; the latter led him into captivity, but he is very bold and thanks God that he shall be delivered from that body of death, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Now since Calvinists talk of two equally opposite principles in God, one the cause of all evil, and the other warring against sin and death, they ought to be bold enough to inform us, whether God will be delivered from this stupendous, yea, infinite body of death, by the same means, or must there be an eternal warfare in the breast of God, and the decrees of his secret will eternally remain to do violence to the wishes and desires of his revealed will? Or must we understand his revealed

will as a mere sham, like the will of the Great King just mentioned?

However, we will return to the Calvinistic notion of the decrees of God, and see how it looks. Mr. Hopkins, under p. 208, allows that sin and holiness both, as they exist in man, are the effects of a divine operation; and that their cause equally originates in God. And p. 154 and 155, he argues, that it would be a contradiction of terms to say sin, as an effect, has, or must have, a sinful cause; for this, says he, would be making sin its own cause, or an effect to produce itself; therefore, we must go further back to find the origin of sin, until we find something in which there is no sin. He continues to ramble back, until he thinks the holy God of Heaven must be the cause. According to the Doctor's rule of sophistry I may say, for one to assert that holiness (which he allows to be an effect) has an holy cause, is a contradiction of terms; for this would be making holiness its own cause, or an effect to produce itself: Therefore we must go farther back to find the origin of holiness, till we find something in which there is no holiness, and then perhaps say, the devil must be the cause of holiness. It is generally the case, that if their arguments prove any thing, they prove too much, even more than they themselves would be willing to allow.

We generally say, the Holy Bible must be a true book, for this reason, because it carries an evidence with it, that the writers wrote it under a divine influence of the God of truth, being moved and lead by him. But Mr. Hopkins either destroys or strengthens this argument, that is, if he does any thing. For, in p. 198 and 199, he allows, that every man acts under a divine influence in all that he does; and in other parts of his writings, as has been shewn, he says God moves wicked men in all their ac-

C

r d

Pa

SII di

pla WI

for

vid

ed

a fe

im

the all

vin

Go

mir arg

not

thes

tions, to do just as they do.

Now, if Mr. Hopkins was right, the common argument in favour of the authenticity of the Bible (which he also uses) falls to the ground, or we must allow every other book to be true, seeing all must have written under divine influence, the God of Truth moving them to write. And Paine's and Voltaire's books must be authentic and the authors true divines, as they were moved by a divine impulse, even under the influence of the God of Truth, who cannot lie nor deceive, according to Revelation. If these things are so, the disciples of Paine and Hopkins ought to be more in fellowship than at present they are. Yea, natural Deists and Calvinists ought to present to each other the hand of fellowship, as brothers in faith, and own their leaders, on both sides, to be divinely inspired, and their writings, as the Bible itself for truth. But, "No," says the natural Deist, " I'll not fel- it. lowship the followers of a murderer. Calvin was a bigotted mur- inst

derer, for Dr. Young, in his book entitled Calvinism and Universalism contrasted, makes this remark, " Calvin was a tyrant, for he had Surveilus burned for daring to have the audacity to differ from him in opinion." And his followers have appeared to be moved by the same spirit of murder when invested with power; witness, they persecuted and hung the poor Quakers at Boston." But hold, thou Deist, God, (that is, the Deity) by his overruling power, according to your own sentiments, moved Calvia and his followers to do as they did, and they could not avoid it; for one of your own sly writers argues, that God is the cause of both natural and moral evil. See Soam Jenyns on the origin of evil, in six letters, p. 108. "Stay your hand, sir, says a Calvinist, for we will not fellowship the followers of Paine and Voltaire: Why! they were both intemperate, loose characters, and their followers the same. They were also murderers, having murdered the character of our priest and of the holy prophets."

Hold, thou Calvinist, according to your own sentiments this was for the glory of God, ordained by him according to the counsel of his holy will. "True, says the Calvinist, but it was against his revealed will, therefore great wickedness." Equally so was the conduct of Calvin and your brethren at Boston. My opinion is, that if one is in the mud, the other is in as deep mire.

According to Calvinism, God, agreeably to his secret will, decreed man should sin and fall, and then, in acquiescence with his revealed will, he made a law forbidding man to sin on pain of death; which is as much as to say, God made a decree and then passed a law ordering man to break that decree or he should surely die. But man broke the law, fulfilled the decree, and then died according to God's secret will. But still, according to their plan of redemption, God's most benevolent, revealed will moved with bowels of compassion in God, which God by his wisdom foresaw, from all eternity, would be the case, therefore had provided a remedy to compromise matters, and as an agent, appointed his only son, whose business it was to divide the spoil, by which a few were to be saved to yield some degree of satisfaction to his impartially revealed will, and to damn the remainder and leave them with the devil in excrutiating and endless torments; and all to satisfy his vindictive, partial, secret will. However, Calvinists try to persuade their pupils that there is no partiality in God, though he created a part of his creatures with a predetermination to damn them, but to save the other part. For they argue, the only end he has in view is his own essential glory, and th not the happiness of a part, neither the misery of the other part; these things are not the object, they say, but the means to obtain el. It. But this miserable shift is only making a bad matter worse instead of better. First, because it contradicts their notion of

it

al

of

ir-

disinterested benevolence in God, and makes him a very selfish being, who has no regard for his children farther than the interest of his own glory prompts him. Second, because it contradicts these words of revelation, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," &c. But their argument is like this, " Not so, John, but God so loved himself, that he gave his only begotten son for his own glory." But here, perhaps, they will say, "We know, that according to God's revealed love, the happiness of the world, in sending his Son, is the object to be obtained. Lut his secret love the reverse, even his own glory alone." But this would be charging God with duplicity, pretending one thing openly, and secretly meaning another. Like some shepherds, who pretend to love the flock, but secretly the fleece is their object; that once obtained, the sheep may starve to death for what they care; another flock they then will seek that has more wool to shear.

But once more let us proceed to unveil Calvinism, show its vi-

tal springs, and then close this discourse.

"God (saith Beza) hath predestinated not only unto damnation, but also unto the causes of it whomsoever he saw meet. The decrees of God cannot be excluded from the causes of corruption."

"It is the opinion (saith Paracus) of our doctors, that God did inevitably decree the temptation and fall of man. The creature sinneth indeed necessarily, by the just judgement of God."

"God (saith Martyr) doth incline and force the wills of wicked men into great sins."

These passages are quoted by Robert Barclay in his Apology

for the Quakers. Prop. 5, p. 113.

But, says the reader, "I perceive you have quoted many passages from Calvinistic authors, in order to explain Calvinism, but nothing from the Bible." True, friend, my reason why is, because it is not a Bible doctrine, not as it relates to the decrees of God, for it relates to secrets which are only found among predestinarians, but not in the Book of Revelation. appealed to their authors in order to unveil Calvanism. had undertaken to explain Christianity, then I must have referred to the Bible, for it is a Bible doctrine and a divine truth in which my soul delighteth. It teaches us that "God is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works," and that his essential nature is love. St. Paul saith, that "He will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." This makes the divine character appear amiable. And as it relates to practical duties, the christian religion teaches us to take up our cross and follow Christ and we shall find an easy yoke and light And likewise, that we must love our brethren and even

our enemies; that we must bless, but not curse them; that we must pray for our enemies, yea, for all men, and that in faith without doubling; which is more than Calvinism can ever teach us without it contradicts itself; for it is as contrary to Christianity as darkness is to light, which it is hoped its advocates will be brought to see, to the glory of God—Amen.

The Sinner invited to Christ.

Hear the Gospel joyful sounding
To the world's remotest end;
Every creature is invited,
To the Lord our heavenly friend.

Jesus stands with arms extended,
To receive you all as one;
Jew and Gentile, sick and wounded,
Come to Jesus, quickly come.

Come, ye foolish, here is wisdom, Ask of Jesus, he'll bestow; Here, ye simple, 's understanding, Which ye cannot find below.

I

ıll,

en-

his

s to

out

ight

even

Come, ye sick, he's your physician, Heavenly balsam he'll apply, Which shall heal your sad condition, Give you health, and peace, and joy.

Come, ye sore and sadly wounded,
Here are oil and wine for you,
Here your wounds shall soon be healed,
Jesus is your neighbour too.

Come, ye naked, here is clothing, Come, receive your heavenly dress, Jesus hath a garment for you, Wrought by his own righteousness.

Come, ye hungry, he will feed you, With the bread of life divine; Here, ye thirsty, 's pure waters, Here is heavenly milk and wine.

Come, ye blind, who live in darkness, He will purge your films away, And upon the sightless eye-ball Usher in eternal day.

Come, ye deaf, your ears he'll open, And new sounds delight your soul, Seraphic strains of free salvation, On your ears shall sweetly roll.

Come, ye lame, forego your crutches, Christ will give you strength to run; Doubt no more, ye fearful hearted, He will help the weak to come.

Ye Pharisee, with self-wrought clothing, Fling away your filthy dress; Come, receive your better garment, Of the Lord our Righteousness.

Ye Publican, and wretched Sinner, Smite upon your breast, and cry Lord have mercy, he'll receive you, And exalt your seat on high.

Ho, all ye! of ev'ry nation, Kindred, name, attend his call, Learn of him, he's meek and lowly, Yoke is easy, burthen's small.

14

Jesus, may thy invitation
Quickly draw us all to thee,
Crying, hungry, blind, and naked,
Lord, receive us, here are we.

mmm

Question. If Christ came into the world to save all men, and hath given an invitation to all, to come, believe, and be saved, and yet a man continues to disregard the call, and lives and dies in a state of unbelief, how can that man ever be saved?

To the above question we answer, by grace, all that have ever sinned, shall finally be saved from sin and misery, which will prove St. Paul's words true, that "where sin abounded grace did much more abound," that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. chap. 5, ver. 1, 20, 21.—This perhaps may be considered as a full and demonstrative answer to the question, "If a man lives and dies in a state of unbelief, how can that man ever be saved?" Yet as we are persuaded that the person who stated the query will expect more to be said on this subject, we will take the liberty, after stating a few doctrina lobservations, to proceed:

1st. We observe that Christ is the saviour of men, through

certain means appointed by the Father.

2d. That those means are all applied through the medium of the Divine Spirit.

3d. That they follow in succession one after the other, until

the object is obtained for which they are employed.

4th. The first means are less powerful in converting and saving sinners, insomuch, few in, or by the first are convinced of the evil nature of sin, and the beauty of holiness, so as to choose the latter; but as many as do fall in with those more mild means, and follow Christ, will shine as the first stars in magnitude, being the first fruits of the spirit, and will eternally out vie all the rest in glory and dignity.

5th. There are times appointed to administer the several means above mentioned, which may be termed probationary dispensations, "for the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, Acts, chap. 3, ver.

21-Ephes. chap. 1, ver. 9, 10, 11, 12.

6th. The times of restitution are not confined to this world alone; the Holy One of Israel, must not be limited to the narrow span of a man's present life, in administering the means of salvation. It is not absolutely necessary that the immortal soul of man should be incumbered with a mortal body, in order for the immortal and Divine Spirit to pay it a visit and administer relief. David speaks of God being with him, even if he made his bed in hell; this was doubtless when he foresaw the glory and victory of Christ, as when by the spirit, he should go and preach to the spirits in prison.

We have now come to fair sailing, having plenty of scripture on our side we may safely proceed. We will call on St. Peter's testimony in this case, 1st Epistle, chap. 3. ver. 18, 19, 20.

What sayest thou Peter? thou hadst the keys of Heaven, and knowest all about these things, come tell us the truth plainly, thou wilt speak the truth in Christ and lie not, for thou hast

the spirit of truth.

Attention to what the inspired man saith. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit; by which also he went & preached to the spirits in prison." What spirits? "Which sometimes were disobedient." When? "When once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was preparing." What did Christ preach to them when no longer in the flesh, being naturally dead? chap. 4, ver. 6, "For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the

flesh, but live according to god in the spirit."

Brethren, we have heard St. Peter's testimony, now let us examine its weight in this case. What think ye brethren? Hark, hear brother A-" I think the testimony very plain, but yet I think it has no reference to a future state. It is plain that Noah was a preacher of righteousness, and that he by the inspiration of the Spirit preached to the inhabitants of the old world who were imprisoned in wickedness, which was St. Peter's meaning." Brother A. you are out, for this reason: It was the same who suffered in the flesh for sin, the just for the unjust, being put to death, &c. who also went, by the Spirit, and preached to the Spirits in prison. And if it was Noah, then he also died for our sins, and rose again by the quickening power of the Spirit, for he who preached by the Spirit, though he was put to death in the flesh, was again quickened by the resurrection power of the Spirit. But, says Brother A. you misunderstood me, I meant, Christ went through the medium of Noah, by the Spirit, and preached the Gospel, &c. Sir, you are wrong again, for Noah was not a Gospel Minister, though he preached the righteousness of the Law, forewarning the people of the approaching flood and of their destruction, but told them nothing about immortality, which is brought to light by the Gospel only; neither have we any account of his inviting them into his Aik of Safety, nor of any glad tidings being told them by him, even of the power of God unto salvation, which St. Paul calls the Gospel, of which he was not ashamed.

I would further observe, St. Peter could mean no preaching in this world, for the verb went implies properly, that Christ went from this to another state. He saith not, that he came and preached, &c. but went, and the time of his going seems to be closely connected with the hour of his exit through means of death, and after follows his being quickened, as in his resurrection, by the same Spirit, by which also he went and preached to the Spirits in prison; and he saith, not to such as were eternally disobedient, but sometime disobedient; and when they were so even in the days of Noah while the Ark was preparing. likewise tells us what they were disobedient to, even " the long sufferings of God which he waited;" but does not say they were disobedient to the preaching of Christ by the Spirit, but intimates the reverse. As the word sometime is an adverb of time, implying limitation in the verb disobelient with which it is connected, therefore their disobedience could not be eternal; and if their rebellion or sin ceased, the cause of their misery had an end; and if the cause is destroyed, misery, the effect, dies with it, for sin is the rest of all sufferings; the root being destroyed, the branches must wither of course.

St. Peter speaks of the Gospel being preached to the dead, in distinction to men in the flesh, yet to answer a similar purpose, even that the dead might be convicted or judged, according to men in the flesh, but brought to live according to God in the spirit, which must be a life of holiness, abstract from the flesh. Now, supposing it was for this cause that the Gospel was preached to the dead, and we deny the existence of the desired effect, we at the same time as fully deny the cause; for to speak of a cause without an effect, is a contradiction of terms, as much as it would be to talk of an effect without a cause; in a word, one does not exist without the other, either subsequent or antecedent.

But brother B. says, the dead, to whom the Gospel was preached, were only morally or spiritually dead in trespasses and sins, yet dwelt in this world. But this, like brother A's idea, makes St. Peter an awkward scholar in the school of Christ, expressing one thing, when he meant another, using bad grammar, &c. Brethren, these ideas will not do; Peter was not so blundering as to say Christ went, when he meant he came, and to say spirits in prison, when he meant men in this world; nor to say Christ

when he meant Noah; neither to say Gospel, when he meant Law, and put to death in the flesh, when he meant preserved in the Ark.

If by dead, is meant spiritually dead in the text, then the cause produced no effect, for the nature of the death still existed; mind the timing of the verb, " to them that are dead," not to them that were dead. The preaching was in the past tense, and connected with Christ's being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit, &c. But the death of those to whom the Gospel was preached still was present, which must mean the tempo-

ral death of the body.

But what shall we do with brother S.? he is a Sadusee; he don't believe much in angel or spirit, and pretends to know nothing about a future state; he says, " No one ever went there and came back to tell us how it is in the other world." He is for bringing an indictment against St. Peter for perjury, in pretending before God, to know so much about a future state, and chose to have him broke from being any longer an Apostle of authenticity. But St. Paul's testimony he says would do, as he speaks the truth in Christ and lies not; he wishes him to be called in. Well, St. Paul, what hast thou to say by inspiration to this case, Heb. chap. 2, ver. 14, 15. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Apostle saith, for he speaks of the world to come, according to the fifth verse. "Forasmuch then as the children are made partakers of flesh and blood, he (that is Christ) also himself, likewise, took part of the same;" for what purpose? "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil;" what else, " and deliver them, who, through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage." Now we have heard the evidence, we will candidly examine its weight in each particular.

1st. As it relates to a connection with St. Peter's testimony. The circumstance of Christ's connection with the flesh and death, as the foundation, is mentioned by both. Next follows a similarity of of purposes to be answered, even such as was to effect beings of another world that never were delivered in their lifetime, so that if we discard one, we must the other also. But let us own the full force of both, and form our opinion according to its weight. The former we have already examined, and the latter now claims our attention, where it relates to a future state.

(To be Continued)

NOTE.

We feel under an obligation to make some apology to the generous patrons of this little Work, for the delay of the first number. The printing was begun according to promise, but it was soon found that there was not sufficient matter in the original manuscript to fill the pages of the Book. The distance at which the Superintending Committee lived from each other and from the Printer, together with other attendant circumstances, rendered it impracticable to proceed with the work till after another meeting of the Conference.

We have seen fit, instead of the Experimental Proverbs mentioned in the Contents, to fill the remaining pages of this Number with part of the answer to a question proposed for the 2d No.

The procrastination of this, will render it impossible for us to present another number until after our next meeting, which will be on the last Saturday of March next. We promise, after that time, our subscribers shall have their numbers regularly.

Superintending Committee.

AMBROSE CLARK, Esq. Otsego.

Rev. CALVIN WINSLOW, Butternuts.

Rev. EDWIN FERRIS, Jericho.

Rev. NATHANIEL STACY, Hamilton.

Rev. PAUL DEAN, Whitestown.

AGENTS.

555555555

The following Brethren are requested to act as Agents to the publishers of the Religious Enquirer, in the several Towns to which they belong and their vicinities, in receiving and distributing the Books, collecting the monies due on the delivery of the same and remitting it to the Superintending Committee.

Rev. CALVIN WINSLOW, Butternuts.

Doct. CHARLES W. HULL, Eaton.

ISAAC BUMPUS, Esq. Nelson.

DAVID COOK, Esq. Smithfield.

ISAAC HAYES, Esq. Unadilla.

Rev. EDWIN FERRIS, Jericho.

Mr. WILLIAM HISCOCK, Duanesburg.

Rev. PAUI. DEAN, Whitestown.

Mr. EDWARD GRAY, Sherburne.

Mr. JESSE BROWN, Norwich.

Rev. NATHANIEL STACY, Hamilton.

Mr. PERLEY E. HOWE, Marcellus.

Mr. CHANDLER W. DRAKE, Burlington.

N. B. Those who act as Agents, will receive their Book gra-